

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 MC-02
IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /092 W
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O R 132349Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3210
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
A/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1641
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1013

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI PFOR EC IS PE UR
SUBJ: CONTINUING ECUADOREAN REACTION TO KFIR VETO

REF: QUITO 901

1. IN THE FIRST GOE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE KFIR CASE,
MINISTER OF DEFENSE ANDRES ARRATA HELD A PRESS INTERVIEW ON
FEB. 10 OUT OF WHICH CAME AN AUTHORIZED COMMUNIQUE WHICH SAID
THAT ECUADOR HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING FOR THE SALE OF THE KFIR WITH
ISRAEL, BUT IN VIEW OF THE US VETO, IT WOULD NOW HAVE TO
LOOK ELSEWHERE. LEFT OUT OF THE COMMUNIQUE, WAS ARRATA'S
REMARK TO REPORTERS THAT ECUADOR DID NOT EXCLUDE THE SOVIET
UNION AS A SUPPLY SOURCE.

2. ON FEB 11. OFFICERS FROM EMBASSY'S MILITARY LIAISON
OFFICE WERE ABLE TO SEE HIGH RANKING AIR FORCE OFFICERS FOR THE
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FIRST TIME SINCE THE KFIR VETO WAS ANNOUNCED. CHIEF OF STAFF
COL. LUCIO ABAD, A FORMER ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON AND
HERETOFORE ONE OF THE MOST STRONGLY US-ORIENTED OFFICERS,
EXPRESSED HIS DEEP BITTERNESS ON THE SUBJECT. ABAD SAID
THAT THE US HAD SHAMED ECUADOR BEFORE THE WORLD BECAUSE OF ITS
ACTION AND THE WAY IT WAS CARRIED OUT WITHOUT WARNING OR
CONSULTATION. HE CLAIMED THAT BY ITS ACTION, THE US DE-

MONSTRATED THAT IT DID NOT REALLY CARE ABOUT HIS COUNTRY. ABAD RELATED THAT HE HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH LOOKING FOR ANOTHER AIRPLANE AND THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS AN OBVIOUS SOURCE. "THE US MAY NOT LIKE WHAT ECUADOR WILL DO IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, BUT THERE IS NOW NO ALTERNATIVE." HE CONCLUDED.

3. GEN. JAIME SEMBLANTES, WHO HAS JUST BEEN NAMED MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AFTER SERVING AS SECRETARY OF THE JOINT STAFF, TOLD DEFATT FEB. 12 THAT GOE WAS DEADLY SERIOUS ABOUT PURCHASING AIRCRAFT FROM THE SOVIETS, IF NO OTHER ALTERNATES ARE AVAILABLE. ECUADOR COULD NOT JUST SIT ON ITS HANDS WITHOUT ANY INTERCEPTOR WHILE PERU BEGINS TO RECEIVE SU-22S IN A FEW MONTHS, HE SAID, HE ADDED THAT ARMY DID NOT SUPPORT A SOVIET DEAL AT PRESENT BUT APPEARANCE OF SU-22 IN PERU WOULD MAKE THIS POSITION UNTENABLE.

4. LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITY MIGUEL ROCA TOLD POLCOUNS FEB. 10 THAT PROBLEM DID NOT LIE IN THE DENIAL OF THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF, BUT IN THE ATMOSPHERE IT HAD CREATED. IN HIS OPINION, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT THAT ECUADOR COULD HAVE VIS-A-VIS POSSIBLE PERUVIAN AGGRESSION WAS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US. HOWEVER, THE PUBLIC DENIAL OF THE KFIR BY THE US INDICATED TO PERU THAT THE US WAS INDIFFERENT TO ECUADOR'S SECURITY PROBLEM AND, LIKE CHILE, COULD NOT COUNT UPON CRUCIAL INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT IN CASE OF CONFLICT. HE CONCLUDED THEREFORE THAT THE US ACTION HAD DEFINITELY INCREASED THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR IN THE ANDES. EMBOFFS HAVE FOUND A SIMILAR LINE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THINKING AMONG A BROAD SPECTRUM OF POLITICIANS, INCLUDING EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS JULIO AROSEMENA.

5. NEWS COVERAGE CONTINUES TO BE HEAVY AND PROMINENT WITH THE PRESS GIVING FRONT PAGE TREATMENT TO EVERY NEW DEVELOPMENT OUT OF WASHINGTON OR ISRAEL. IN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL COMMENT THUS FAR, MIDDLE OF THE ROAD EL EXPRESO OF GUAYAQUIL ASKED ON FEB. 11, "WHO HAS GIVEN THE US THE TUTELARY CAPACITY (TO DETERMINE WHICH ARMS ARE NECESSARY) OVER ITS NEIGHBORS ON THE CONTINENT. EACH COUNTRY IS THE PROPRIETOR OF ITS OWN SOVEREIGNTY AND MUST DECIDE ITS OWN FATE AND KNOW WHAT IS GOOD OR NOT FOR IT. THE TENDENCY TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF CONTROLLER OF THE WORLD HAD CAUSED MUCH HARM TO THE US AND HAS CARRIED TO TERRIBLE DEFEATS AS IN VIETNAM." IT ACCUSED THE US OF DOING NOTHING TO PREVENT THE PERUVIAN ARMS BUILD-UP THROUGH THE SOVIETS, WHILE SHUTTING OFF THE EFFORTS OF A SMALL COUNTRY TO DEFEND ITSELF. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED, "THE WHITE HOUSE AND PETAGON OUGHT TO THINK HARD THAT THE ROLE OF INTER-

NATIONAL POLICEMAN DOES NOT SUIT THEM. IT IS NEITHER
SUITABLE, NOR ACCEPTABLE, NOR TOLERABLE."
BLOOMFIELD

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